

MEET NAVY MEDICINE'S FORCE MASTER CHIEF

Navy Medicine's force master chief is the Navy surgeon general's senior enlisted advisor. He or she is also dual-hatted as the director of the Hospital Corps, the Navy's largest enlisted rating and only enlisted corps.

Force Master Chief Hosea Smith Jr. assumed this position in March 2017. As the new force master chief, Smith reflects on his career and the value of Navy Medicine.



Vice Adm. Forrest Faison, Navy surgeon general, passes the cutlass from Force Master Chief Terry J. Prince to Force Master Chief Hosea Smith Jr., marking the assumption of his role as Navy Medicine Force Master Chief, and director of the Hospital Corps during a change of charge ceremony at the Defense Health Headquarters March 24. (U.S. Navy photo by Mariah Felipe, U.S. Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery public affairs/Released)

Why did you decide to join Navy Medicine?

I grew up in Fayetteville, North Carolina as an Air Force brat, and as a result, I wanted to carry on my father's legacy and join the Air Force. When I went to the recruiter's office, the Air Force recruiter wasn't there so I met with the Navy recruiter and decided to join the Navy without choosing what job I would have once I left boot camp.

While at boot camp, I originally wanted to do clerical and administrative type of work, but once I read about the hospital corps and saw what they were about, I chose my job and the rest is history.

What are some of the most distinct memories of your career in Navy Medicine?

My first tour as an Independent Duty Corpsman (IDC) on USS O'Brien (DD 975) was probably the most challenging assignment I'd ever had. IDCs are different because they are trained to serve as the sole source of medical care for the Sailors and Marines they deploy with.

In my case, I was responsible for the health of more than 300 people with only two junior Sailors working with me. The whole crew entrusts their health care to their corpsmen and it's a responsibility we don't take lightly.

What is the Hospital Corps?

The Hospital Corps is comprised of more than 30,000 men and women who are ready to provide health care to Sailors, Marines and their families no matter the environment. Our corpsmen are the heart of Navy Medicine. They're on the frontlines, standing shoulder to shoulder with doctors and nurses ensuring our shipmates and fellow Marines are receiving the best health care we can deliver. That's why I'm proud to be a hospital corpsman myself, and to represent the force. My title may be Force Master Chief, but our hospital corpsmen are truly the force that keeps this organization running.



Force Master Chief Hosea Smith, Director of the Hospital Corps, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, speaks with Sailors during the 2017 DoD Warrior Games in Chicago June 30, 2017. The DoD Warrior Games are an annual event allowing wounded, ill and injured service members and veterans to compete in Paralympic-style sports including track and field, shooting, archery, swimming, sitting volleyball and wheelchair basketball. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class John Paul Kotara II)

What is the Hospital Corps mission?

Our mission as hospital corpsmen is and will always be to support the warfighter and their families by providing them the best health care our nation can offer.

Why is Navy Medicine so important?

Wherever the United States has Navy and Marine Corps forces, Navy Medicine is there. Whether it's on the sea, below the sea or on the battlefield with the Marines, we are there. Wherever our Sailors and Marines

go there's a corpsman, a nurse or doctor ready to take care of them, making us invaluable to the Navy and Marine Corps mission.



Navy Medicine West and Naval Medical Center San Diego (NMCSD) Command Master Chief Hosea Smith Jr., shares congratulatory high-fives with NMCSD's Chief's Mess while walking down a red carpet during a farewell celebration. The event was a celebratory goodbye for Smith and NMCSD's Senior Chief Hospital Corpsman Jerry M. Juan before they transfer to new commands. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communications Specialist 3rd Class Benjamin Kelly/Released)